THE CLEVELAND MUSEUM OF ART

NEWS

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CMA Presents Italian Singer-Songwriter at Pilgrim Congregational Church on Nov. 4

"The Italian Leonard Cohen."
– Globe and Mail

CLEVELAND (Oct. 21, 2005) — One of Europe's most acclaimed singer-songwriters **Gianmaria Testa**, will perform his evocative Italian love songs at the **Pilgrim Congregational Church on Friday, Nov. 4, 2005, at 7:30 p.m.** This performance is part of The Cleveland Museum of Art's **VIVA! and Gala Around Town Series**. Interspersed with accents of tango, bossa nova, habanera and jazz, Testa's songs impart great beauty with simplicity and directness. This tour will take Mr. Testa to New York, Chicago, Los Angeles and Cleveland.

Admission to the performance is $34; $29 for CMA members.

Testa's warm, husky voice has been described as melodic and inspired and has often been compared to American vocalist, Leonard Cohen. Born near Cuneo in Italy's Piedmont region to a family of farmers, Testa is a self-taught guitarist and began writing songs upon learning his very first chords. His songs feature stories of everyday people and things that take on surprising dimensions: lovers in Rome, the moon, chestnut trees, chalk dust left on doorsteps to mark the steps of visitors and many others.

He released his first CD, ***Montgolfieres*** in 1995 shortly after winning first prize at the Recanati Festival for emerging artists and demonstrated his viability as an artist of great presence. A year later, Testa released his second CD, ***Extra-muros*** on Warner France's newest recording label dedicated to songwriters. With a renewed richness and depth to his voice, the album showcased his sincerity and subtle elegant way of telling tales of melancholy and quiet joy.

In February 1997, Testa performed at the legendary Olympia in Paris, an engagement that marked a key moment in his young career. In the span of two years, he had gone from a completely unknown Italian singer-songwriter to a runaway success and remained composed, sincere and confident despite the immediacy of his success. In addition, the Italian press began to recognize his legitimacy and hailed him as a new and important voice among the traditional Italian singer-songwriters.

Testa began touring extensively and undertook nearly 100 dates in small clubs and theatres and with each performance he received standing ovations and critical acclaim. In 1999 he released ***Lampo***, an album that features Glenn Ferris (trombone), Vincent Segal (cello), Riccardo Tesi (folk accordion), and Rita Marcotulli (piano); some of his favorite musicians.

(more)

His third album, ***Il valzer di un giorno*** was a departure from the norm, featuring simply his solo voice backed by an acoustic guitar. It was Testa's first CD recorded and produced entirely in Italy and distributed via alternative channels: Italy's 45,000 newsstands. As a result, ***Il valzer di un giorno*** sold 20,000 copies in its very first month of release and needed to be re pressed and has reached platinum status. His latest album, ***Altre latitudini*** released in 2003 in Europe and later in America in 2004 received extensive airplay on WNYC, the largest NPR station in the United States.

The Museum receives operating support from the Ohio Arts Council. Promotional support for VIVA! and Gala Around Town is provided by 90.3 WCPN Ideastream, WCLV 104.9 FM and Cleveland Free Times. Additional support provided by Collacott Foundation.

The Cleveland Museum of Art is one of America's leading comprehensive Museums. Its permanent collection is world renowned for its quality and breadth, spanning 6,000 years. The Museum is a significant international forum for exhibitions, scholarship and art acquisitions. For more information on the Museum, its holdings, programs, services and events, call 1-888-CMA-0033 or visit www.ClevelandArt.org.

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